



The 10th Anniversary of the March 17-19, 2003 Snowstorm





Narrative Summary

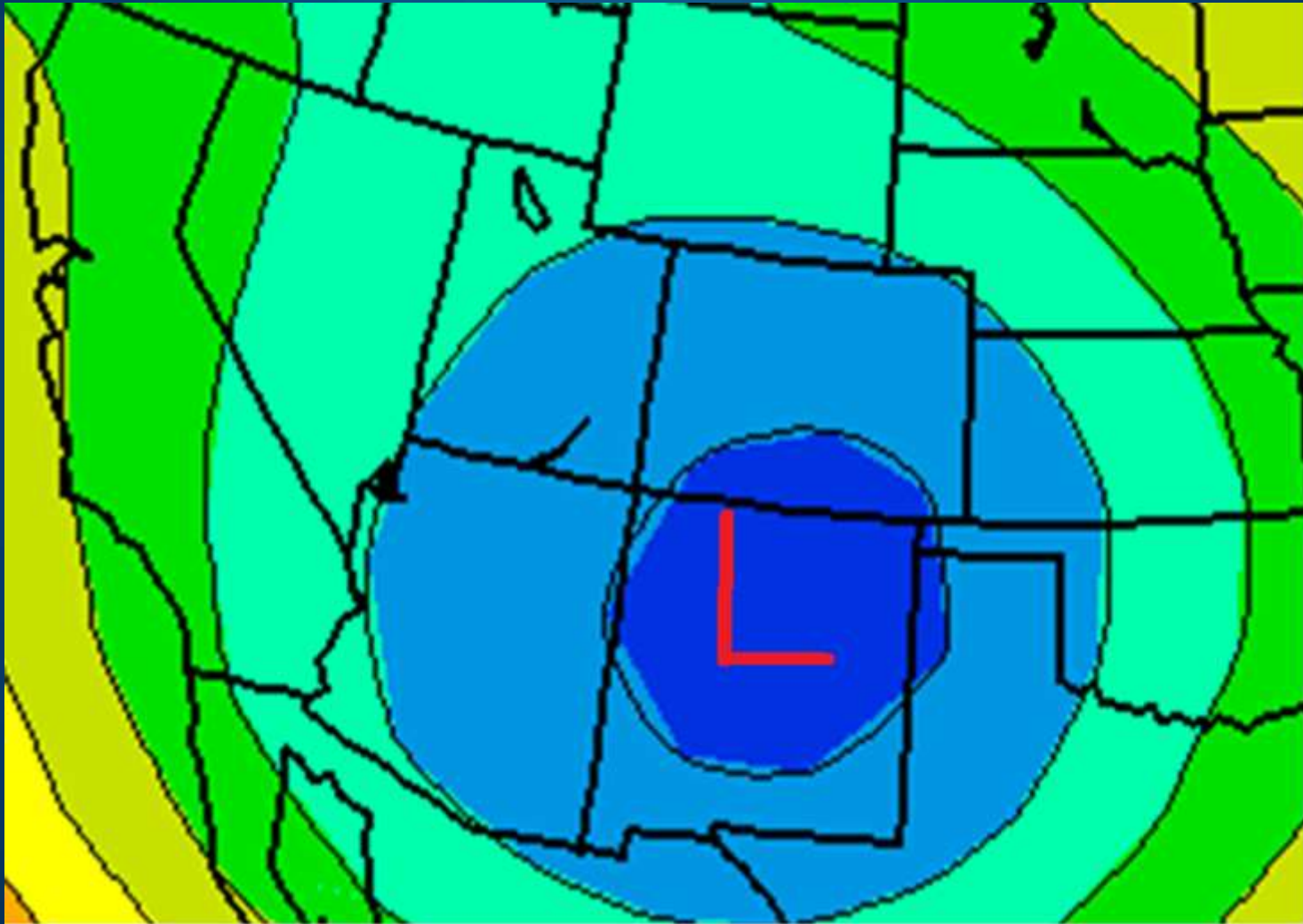
In 2003, one of the worst blizzards since historic records began in 1872 struck metro Denver with a vengeance. Heavy wet snow accumulating to around 3 feet in the city and to more than 7 feet in the foothills brought transportation to a near standstill. North winds sustained to 30 mph with gusts as high as 41 mph produced drifts to 6 feet in parts of the Denver Metro area. The estimated cost of property damage alone, not including large commercial buildings, was 93 million dollars making it the costliest snowstorm ever. Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver said "This is the storm of the century, a backbreaker, a record breaker, a roof breaker." Two people died in aurora from heart attacks after shoveling the heavy wet snow. The National Guard sent 40 soldiers and 20 heavy duty vehicles to rescue stranded travelers along I-70 east of Gun Club Road. The heavy wet snow caused roofs of homes and businesses to collapse. The snow also downed trees, branches, and power lines. Two people were injured when the roofs of their homes collapsed. In Denver alone at least 258 structures were damaged. Up to 135,000 people lost power during the storm, and it took several days for power to be restored in some areas. Denver International Airport was closed, stranding about 4,000 travelers. The weight of the heavy snow caused a 40-foot gash in a portion of the tent roof, forcing the evacuation of that section of the main terminal building.



Avalanches in the mountains and foothills closed many roads including I-70, stranding hundreds of skiers and travelers. Along I-70, an avalanche released by the Colorado Department of Transportation blocked the interstate in both directions for several hours. Several residences between Bakerville and Silver Plume were evacuated because of the high avalanche danger. At Eldora ski area, 270 skiers were stranded when an avalanche closed the main access road. After the storm ended, a military helicopter had to ferry food to the resort until the road could be cleared. The heavy snow trapped thousands of residents in their foothills homes in Jefferson county for several days. Two homes burned to the ground when fire crews could not reach the residences. Some schools remained closed well into the following week. The storm officially dumped 31.8 inches of snow at the site of the former Stapleton International Airport, the most snowfall from a single storm since the all-time record snowfall of 37.5 inches on December 4-5, 1913. The storm made March 2003 the snowiest march on record, the 4th snowiest month on record, and the 5th wettest March on record. The 22.9 inches of snow on the 18th into the 19th was the greatest 24 hour snowfall ever recorded in the city during the month of March. The storm was also a drought-buster, breaking 19 consecutive months of below normal precipitation in the city. Snowfall across metro Denver and in Fort Collins ranged from 2 feet to more than 3 feet. The highest amounts included; 40 inches in Aurora, 38 inches in Centennial and 6 miles east of Parker, 37 inches at Buckley AFB, 35 inches in southwest Denver, 34 inches in Louisville, 32 inches in Arvada, 31 inches in Broomfield and Westminster, and 22.5 inches in Boulder. In the foothills, snowfall ranged from 3 feet to more than 7 feet. Some of the most impressive storm totals included; 87.5 inches atop Fritz Peak and in Rollinsville, 83 inches at Cabin Creek, 74 inches near Bergen Park, 73 inches northwest of Evergreen, 72 inches in Coal Creek Canyon, 70 inches at Georgetown, 63 inches near Jamestown, 60 inches near Blackhawk, 55 inches at Eldora Ski Area, 54 inches 8 miles west of Sedalia, and 46.6 inches at Ken Caryl Ranch. Locations from east of Greeley to Limon received almost all rain from this event, with rainfall amounts ranging from 1 to 2.5 inches.

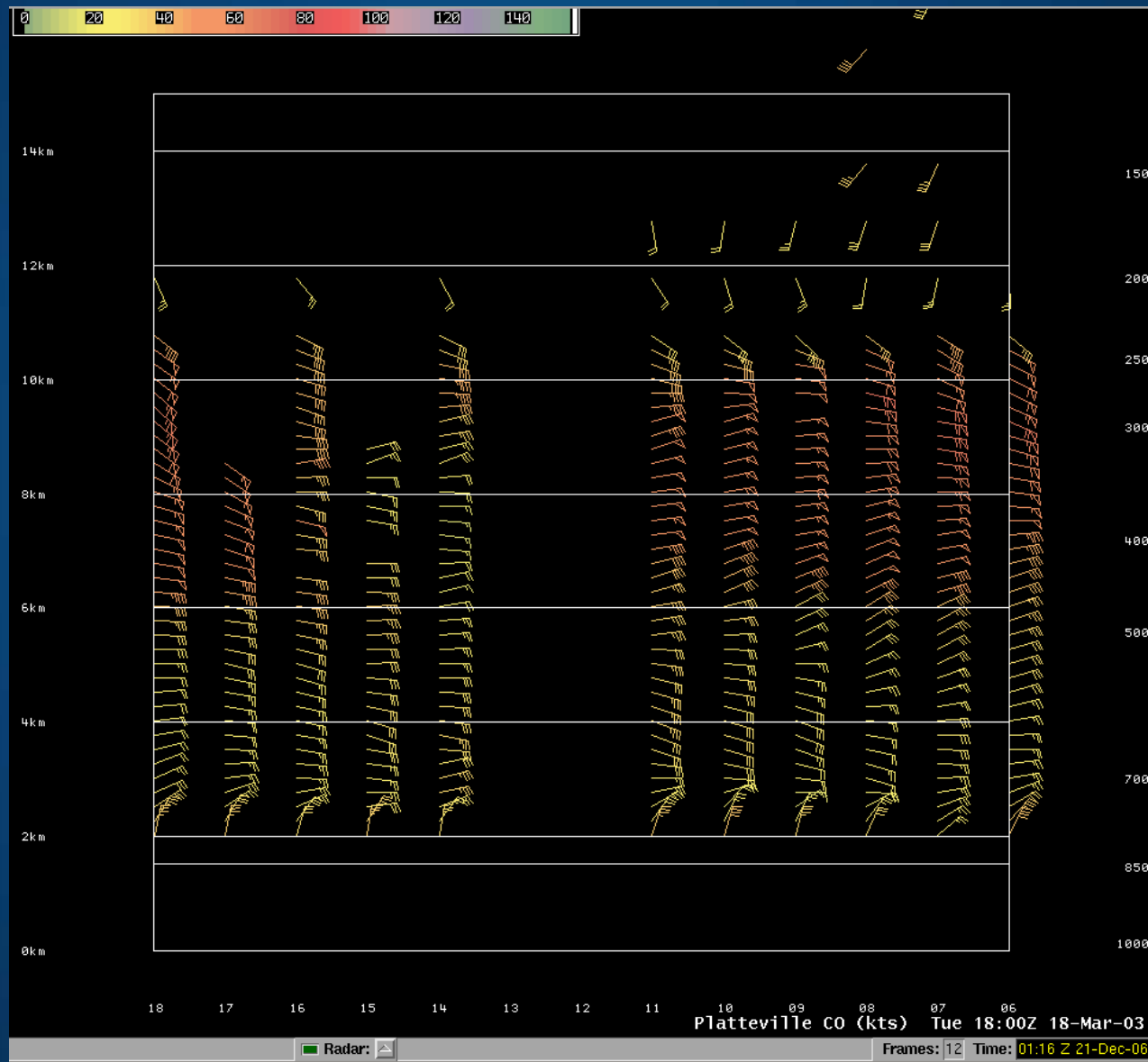


Storm Center on March 18, 2003





Profiler
from
Platteville
CO,
showing
deep and
strong
easterly
upslope
winds
created by
deep and
powerful
storm to
our South





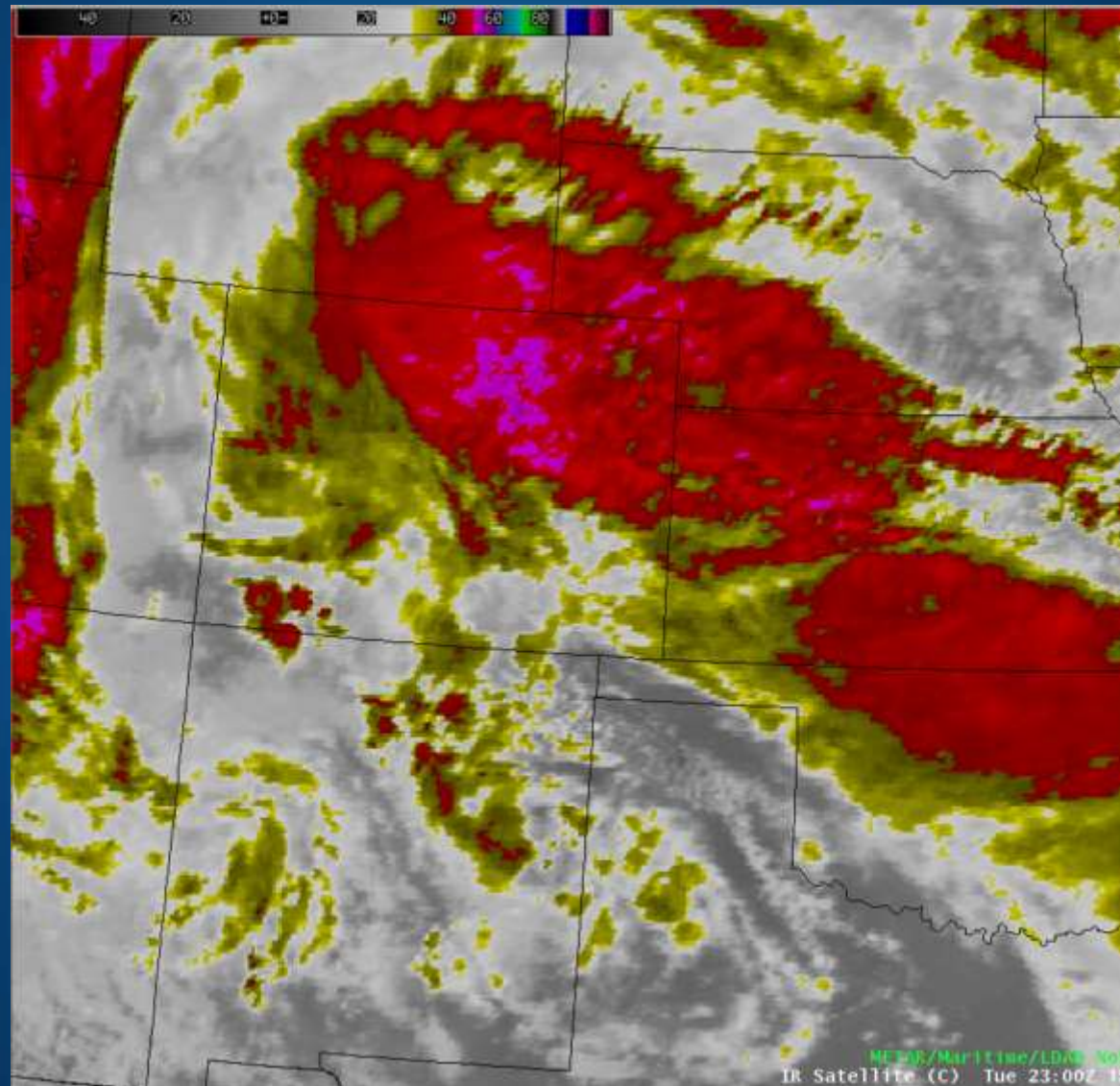
The Top 10 Snowstorms

(historical perspective)

Date	Denver Totals
Dec 1-5, 1913	45.7"
Mar 17-19, 2003	31.8"
Nov 2-4, 1946	30.4"
Dec 24, 1982	23.8"
Apr 21-23, 1885	23.0"
Oct 20-23, 1906	22.7"
Oct 24-25, 1997	21.9"
Nov 26-27, 1983	21.5"
Dec 20-21, 2006	20.7"
Jan 29-31, 1883	19.3"



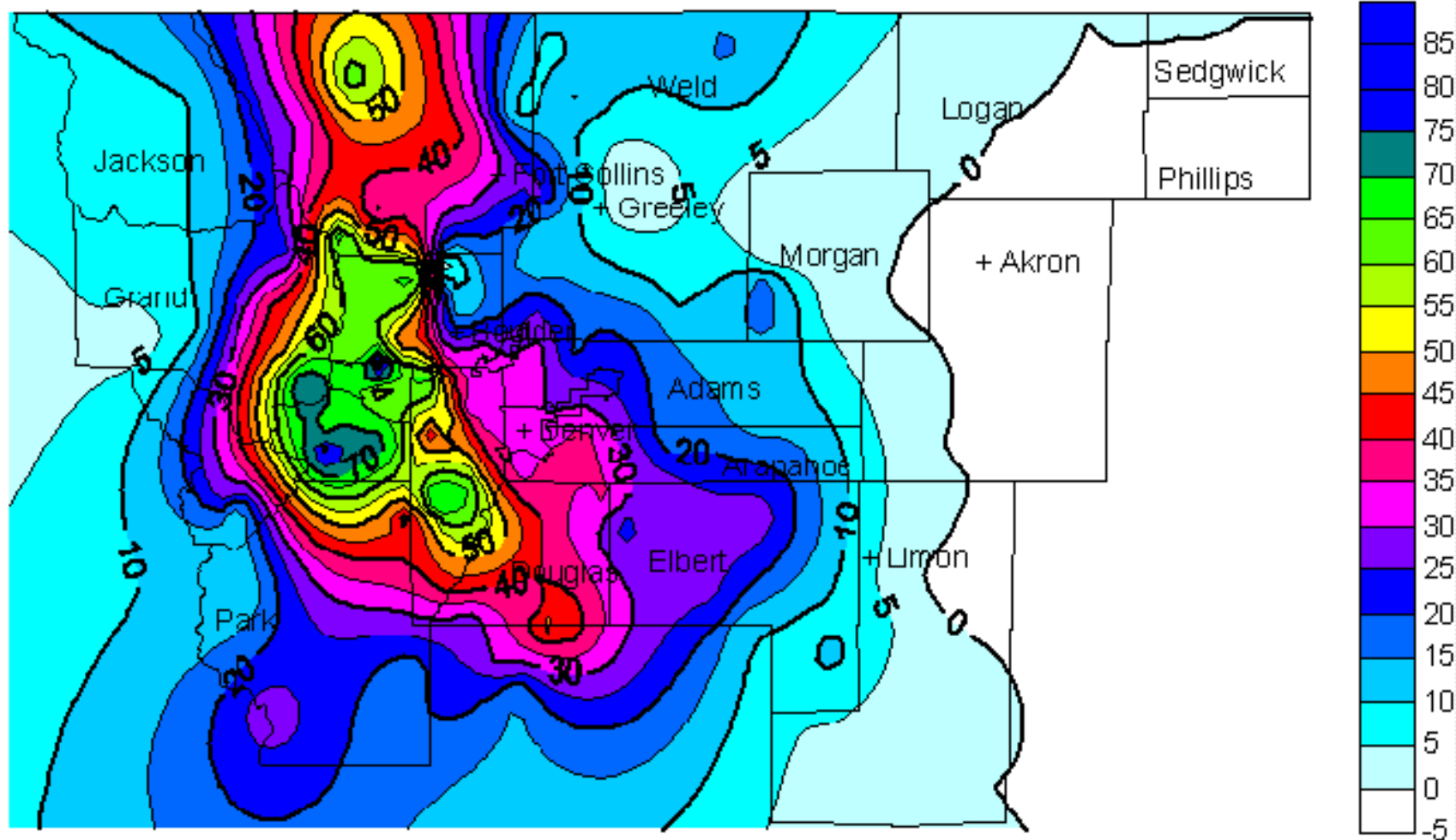
Tuesday,
March 18,
2003
satellite
imagery.
Note:
Deep
plume of
gulf
moisture
streaming
into
Colorado
from the
Southeast



Snow Totals

March 17-20, 2003 Storm Totals

COOP/CAST Observers





Snow Totals ski areas



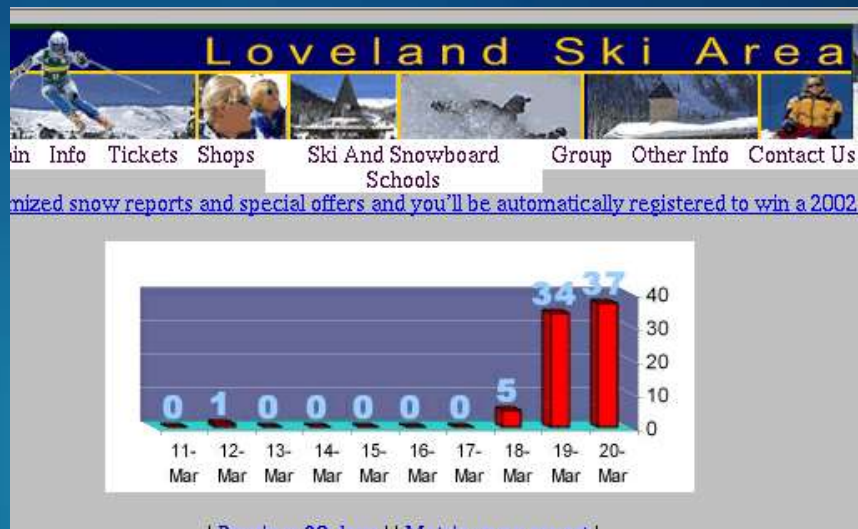
Snow Report



Report Last Updated 3/20/03 9:39 AM

ELDORA REMAINS CLOSED TODAY, due to no access to the resort. We anticipate opening tomorrow (Friday)

New snow since 3/20/03 6:08 AM:	8.0 inches
New snow in the last 24 hours:	8.0 inches
New snow in the last 48 hours:	43.0 inches
New snow in the last 72 hours:	63.0 inches





MOUNTAIN 800-979-0332

Snow Report
Lifts & Trails
Six Day Forecast
Trail Maps and Info
Mary Jane
Mountain Cams
E-Postcards
Virtual Tours

Snow, Conditions, & Trail Report

Current Conditions updated 03/20/2003 at 15:22:57

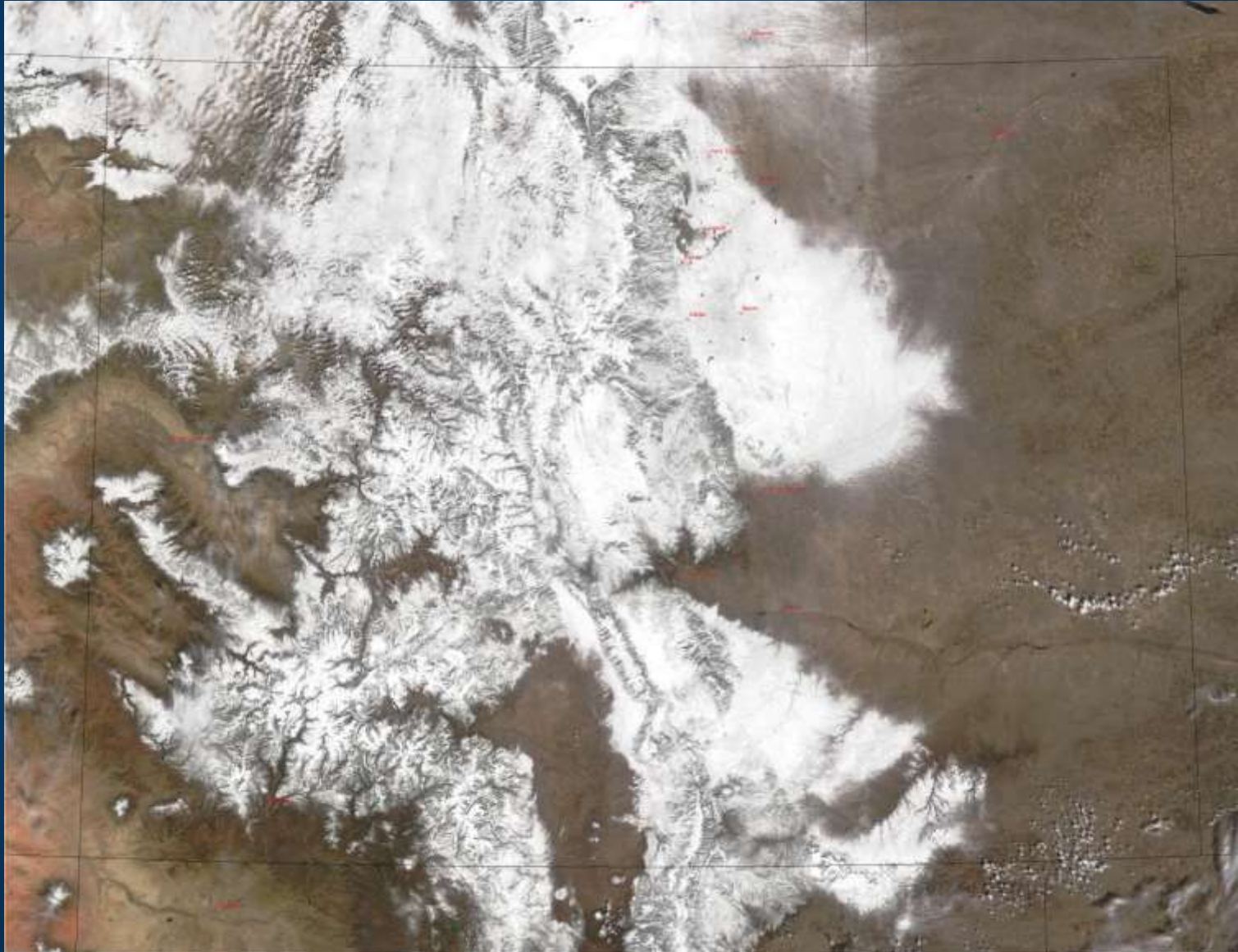
Lifts Open: 12	Summit Depth: 128" (325 cm)
Trails Open: 89	Mid-Mountain Depth: 120" (305 cm)
New Snow in Last 24 hrs: 9.5" (24 cm)	Village Temperature: 30°F (-1°C)
New Snow in Last 48 hrs: 53" (135 cm)	Summit Temperature: 23°F (-5°C)
New Snow in Last 72 hrs: 71" (180 cm)	Wind: NWN 0 to 15mph
Season-to-Date Snowfall: 350.2" (890 cm)	Sky: Partly Cloudy
	Conditions: Powder

[View 6 day weather forecast](#)

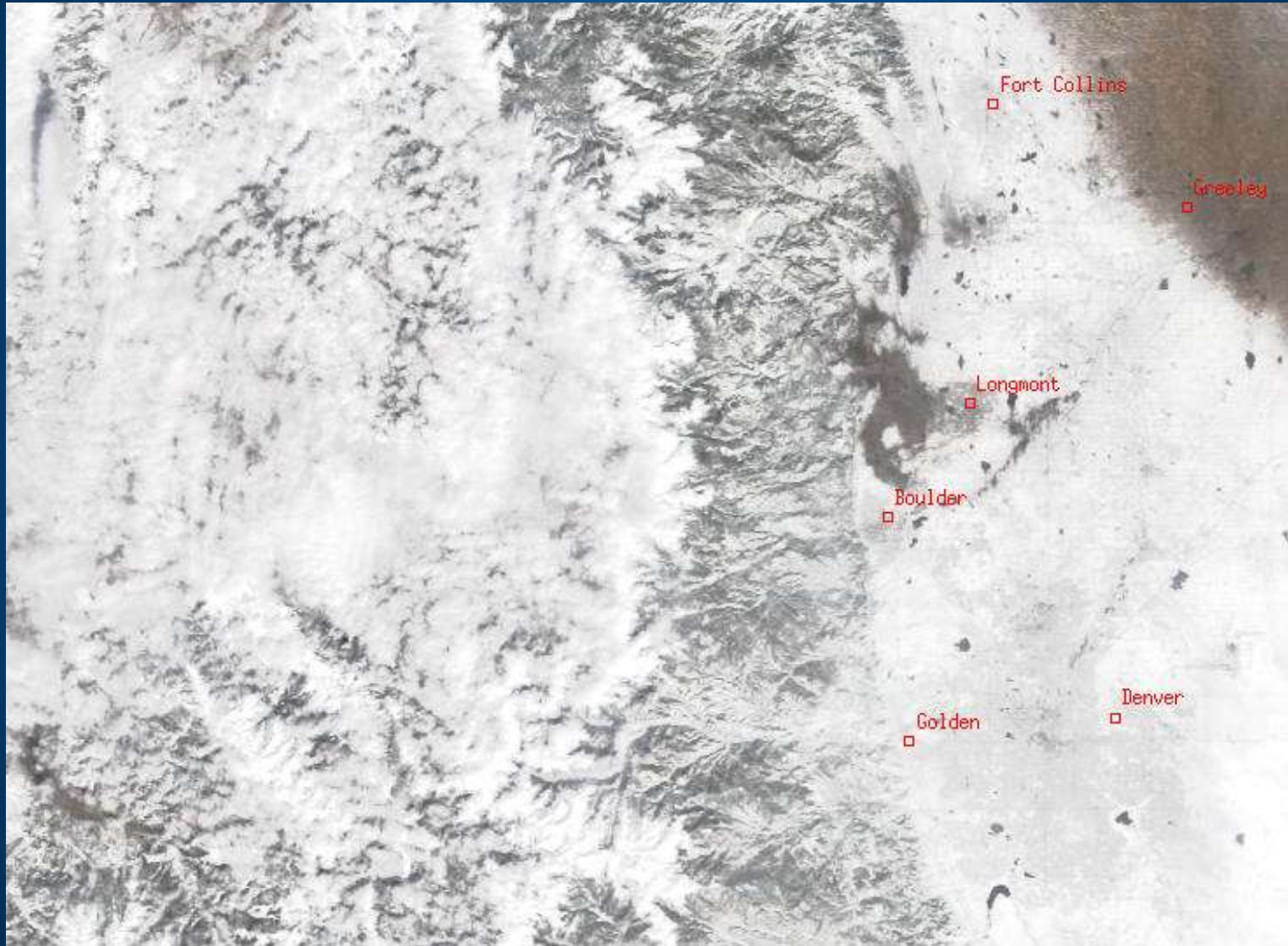




Post-storm visible image



Post-storm visible satellite image – close up



East Boulder:





Coal Creek Canyon

